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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT Sighting of Soviet Merchant Vessel

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The Office of Naval Intelligence (12ND, No 104-53) furnished the following information to CIA for IAC dissemination in accordance with par 3c of NSCID#7.

1. Sighting. A vessel flying the Soviet merchant ship flag was observed with a drydock and tug in tow astern. See Enclosure (A) figure 2/during daylight hours on 1 or 2 May 1953 by a merchant mariner in the vicinity of 34°N-145°E. About 250 miles east of Yokohama.
2. Merchant Vessel. The vessel was estimated to be 350 to 400 feet in length and weigh four thousand tons. She was low in the water with an approximate course of 000 true and speed of six knots. She is described as a broken well deck ship with two hatches forward, one amidships and two aft. She had a king post with two booms located between the two forward hatches and a second king post with two booms between the after hatches. There was a third king post with a single boom just aft of the amidships hatch. The stack and crew's quarters were amidships and the bridge about two thirds forward from the stern. Her hull was black and the superstructure white. The stack was black with a red stripe. A white hammer and sickle appeared on the red stripe. no armament, that the crew did not show themselves on the vessel, drydock or tug and that the ship made no apparent changes in course while in sight. The name of the ship was visible but was in Russian and not recorded by
3. Drydock. The drydock was being towed approximately three hundred feet astern of the merchant ship. The informant estimated the drydock to be 400 - 500 feet in length.
4. Tug estimated the tug to be about 35 or 40 feet in length. She was on a towline approximately 200 feet astern of the drydock but apparently under her own power and evidently being utilized as a sea anchor. A yellow balloon approximately eight feet in diameter was being flown from the stern of the tug on at least 50 feet of line. unable to determine the purpose of the balloon.
5. Towlines. Both towlines were below the surface for the most part and appeared to be single lines.
6. Lifeboats. Four lifeboats, two on the port and two on the starboard side, See Enclosure (A) figure 1, were observed on the merchant vessel.

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ENCLOSURE (A): Sketch of Soviet Merchant Vessel - Figure 1 shows hatch, king posts, crew's quarters, bridge, lifeboats, forecastle, poop deck and stack. Figure 2 shows merchant vessel, drydock, tug, balloon, towing lines.

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ENCLOSURE (A)

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SKETCH OF SOVIET MERCHANT VESSEL

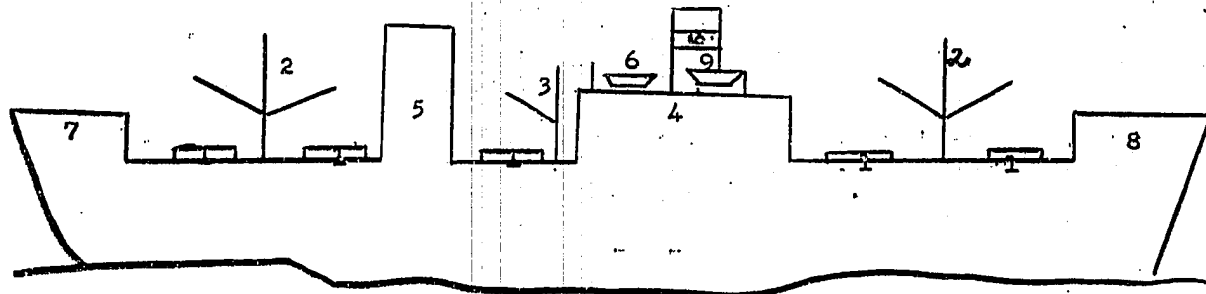


FIGURE 1 * (Port Side)

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Hatch | 6. Lifeboats |
| 2. Kingpost (2 booms) | 7. Forecastle |
| 3. Kingpost (1 boom) | 8. Poop deck |
| 4. Crew's quarters | 9. Stack (Black with red stripe and white hammer and sickle) |
| 5. Bridge | |

* Hull - Black, superstructure white. Overall length approximately 400'.

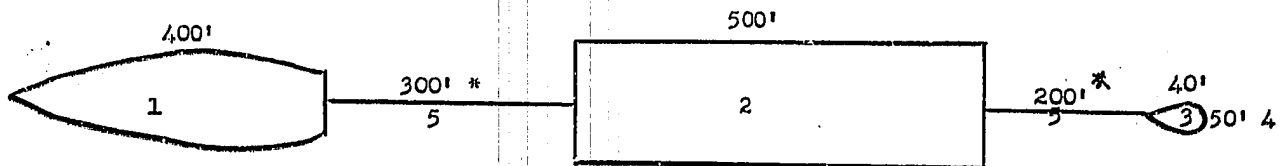


FIGURE 2 *

1. Merchant vessel. 2. Drydock. 3. Tug. 4. Balloon. 5. Towing lines.

* Represents distances between vessels - not length of tow lines.

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